

Landscape, Community, Nature

The motivation to grow wild flowers or create wild flower meadows is greatly enhanced when one studies the finer details of **ecological associations of plants and insects**.

For example.... In the establishment of wild flower meadows, incorporating the use of **Yellow rattle** a grass parasite, to reduce grass vigour and add colour in the early summer is becoming more well known.

This knowledge was once common to people living in the countryside and lost to many with migration to towns and cities!

Yellow Rattle:
Rhinanthus minor



A single healthy meadow can be home to over 100 species of wildflowers, which in turn supports other meadow wildlife. For example, the common bird's-foot trefoil is a food plant for 160 species of insects, which in turn support mammals and birds such as shrews and lapwings



<https://plantwild.co.uk/garden-meadow-maintenance/>

<https://www.dorsetwildlifetrust.org.uk/wildlife-explorer/wildflowers/yellow-rattle>

However, Yellow rattle as a host to the rare: Broad bordered Bee hawk-moth *Hemaris fuciformis*, is less well known, but an **extra incentive to establish wild flower lawns in gardens and public spaces**.

I'm looking forward this summer to looking out for this moth which is **day flying**: More established in the East of the country, I'm hoping the recently established flower meadow in my clients garden in Devon may be attracted to the Yellow Rattle which has reappeared self sown after establishing from plug plants for the last two years.

Broad bordered Bee hawk-moth *Hemaris fuciformis*



<https://butterfly-conservation.org/moths/broad-bordered-bee-hawk-moth>

Other nectar plants: Bugle, Ragged Robin, Rhododendron, louseworts and Aubretia.

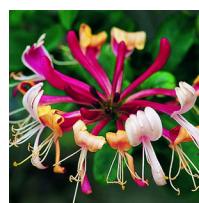


Ragged Robin
Lychnis flos-cuculi

Lava



The greenish caterpillars feed on **honeysuckle (Lonicera)** and **bedstraw (Galium)**. The young larvae create small circular holes in honeysuckle leaves, resulting in a distinctive feeding pattern, and this is often a good way to find the species.



Honeysuckle
Lonicera periclymenum



Bedstraw
Galium verum